DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 678 CS 014 617

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TITLE Resisting Reading Mandates: How To Triumph with the Truth.
ISBN ISBN-0-325-00446-3
PUB DATE 2002-02-00
NOTE 121p.; Foreword by Dick Allington.
AVAILABLE FROM Heinemann, 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 ($15). Tel: 800-793-2154 (Toll Free); Fax: 800-847-0938 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.heinemann.com.
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Government Role; *Phonics; Primary Education; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; *Reading Research; *Research Problems
IDENTIFIERS Mandatory Programs; *National Reading Panel; Research Results

ABSTRACT

Teachers today are in a stranglehold as a glut of mandates and standards restrict their ability to make decisions in their own classrooms. In many schools, scripted, regimented commercial programs further erode their power to view their students as individuals with unique talents and needs. Even the words they use "to teach" are no longer their own as they read their way through the tightly scripted manuals. In addition to district and state mandates, the federal government has joined in the attack as monies are distributed or withheld based on schools' compliance with the "scientific" research that robs educators of their power to think and act. This book dejargonizes the research and takes readers behind the curtain, using the author/educator's own research and analysis of the issues, applying them to real classrooms in an easy-to-read format teachers can use. The book takes on the National Reading Panel (NRP) Report, specifically the research summarized in the phonics subgroup report, and robs it of its power by meticulously documenting its basic flaws. In the process, the book enables readers to respond to the "research says" claims with solid arguments, using the NRP's very own words. Furthermore, it reveals the true findings of the NRP's report on commercial programs and isolated phonics instruction and the strong financial links that are connected to its "science." It gives educators the tools they need to stand up and talk back. (Contains 67 notes and 39 references. Appendix A lists studies in the phonics database, their characteristics and effect sizes; Appendix B lists studies included in the NPR meta-analysis.) (NKA)

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